

Because the plan of the Federal Children's Bureau has such broad implications in relation to present and future medical practice, it will be of interest to note how its administration will work out in actual practice in the months ahead.

### AN AUTHOR, de KRUIF, FINDS IN CALIFORNIA THE SOLUTION OF FUTURE MEDICAL PRACTICE!

**Comments on a Book Review.**—Last month CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE received for review a copy of the book, "Kaiser Wakes the Doctors," by Paul de Kruif. Comment is here made on the volume because the author, as a result of visits to the Kaiser shipyards in the San Francisco Bay region, has persuaded or entranced himself into proposing that the solution of the problem of providing adequate medical care for all classes of citizens is to be found in the medical service arrangements that have been set up in the shipyards located in Richmond, California, at Vancouver, Washington, and other places where Mr. Henry Kaiser and associates have installed their wartime industries.

In the description of the plans he discusses, de Kruif makes more than generous use of superlative adjectives, the three personages who receive most of his superpraises being: the director of the shipyards, Mr. Kaiser; its medical supervisor, Doctor Garfield; and the author himself, Mr. Paul de Kruif.

If the plan of medical service as it is being operated in the enterprises of the Kaiser interests possessed all the merits so enthusiastically portrayed by de Kruif, and if the procedures propagandized by him were new and particularly could be used in urban and rural districts of California and other states where altogether different conditions exist, then the laudations so generously bestowed upon Messrs. Kaiser, Garfield, and de Kruif might not only be justified but perhaps might even be accepted by the medical profession, which is the one group of citizens whose members have the most direct and intimate knowledge of the medical care problems which the book attempts to discuss.

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**Excerpts in This Issue.**—In this number,\* excerpts from de Kruif's opus, with comments thereon, are presented for the convenience of readers who may be reluctant to pay two dollars for the opportunity to read his cure-all exposition or advocacy of the millenium in medical service—at least until they have first assured themselves that the expenditure involved will be justified. Members of the State Association should take the time to scan the items referred to, since the story largely revolves around plans now in operation in California. After perusal of the excerpts and comments, readers may more easily decide whether they wish to embark upon the financial outlay involved in purchase of the author's effort as given in some 158 pages of text.

\* See article, "Kaiser Wakes the Doctors?," on page 244.

**Author's Analogy Is Faulty.**—In the volume, de Kruif as analogist†, outlines the plans of the Permanente Foundation and related medical services now offered in the shipyards, where 50 cents per week is deducted from wages of each employee (there being practically no acquisition costs in securing members to the plan, certainly a great administrative saving!); the wage deductions being taken from a group of about 100,000 workers (the families, however, are not included!); the plan being in operation in enterprises where all the workers reside within a small and limited geographical area. In essence, the discovery—for that is how de Kruif seems to regard it—is nothing more than an application of the age-old principle of prepayments on an insurance basis, designed to give protective coverage to a limited group of poor risks through acquisition of a large number of paying good risks.

However, when from this special instance—an unusual and wartime condition related to a large number of workers under a single management—de Kruif proceeds to draw the general conclusion, that the same degree of medical service could be brought into being throughout almost the entire United States, not only for workers but also for their families, and in regions where the wage-earners are scattered and working for many instead of a single employer, and so forth, one is tempted to wonder in what college or school of experience de Kruif took his courses in logic. When analogies used as premises are not sound, it follows that the conclusions and recommendations made thereon are in error. Many inconsistencies in statements and reasoning are presented by de Kruif, but for these, readers are referred to the book itself; or to the excerpts in this issue, which appear on page 244.

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**Regrettable Results of Promulgations Such as Those of de Kruif.**—In spite of its radical proposals, it is not surprising that de Kruif's book has received some complimentary review notices from lay editors, whose lack of knowledge of medical practice prevents them from discerning the fallacies to be found in the author's expositions. For example, see "Books on Parade" review, on page 249.

Unfortunately, such reviews in the public press are read by a host of citizens, many of whom are thus led into accepting erroneous concepts concerning existing medical practice.

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**Interesting Statements by Mr. Kaiser.**—Mr. Henry Kaiser himself seems to have fallen under the spell of either de Kruif's or his own thinking, if one may judge from recent press dispatches of a speech by him, which can best speak for itself. Quotation follows:

SEVEN CENTS A DAY MEDICINE SEEN

New York, Sept. 18 (INS).—Henry J. Kaiser foresees a future in which the health of the entire American popu-

† Oxford English Dictionary, in its definition of analogy, states "Presumptive reasoning based on the assumption that if things have similar attributes they will have other similar attributes." "Analogist, one who seeks, or argues from, analogies."

lation will be safeguarded by "little Mayo clinics"—small, personalized groups in which medical and hospital care is financed through individual payment of seven cents a day, or less.

The "miracle man of shipbuilding" told the convention of disabled American Veterans about it Saturday, and later amplified his statements in an interview with reporters.

Kaiser described his seven-cents-a-day system now in operation throughout his vast network of shipyard enterprises—a plan which he originated at Grand Coulee dam four or five years ago.

#### Plan Boosts Efficiency

"This is prepaid health insurance," he said, "and I believe it has increased our efficiency at least 5 per cent. In one month fifty-five doctors treated 125,000 patients. We don't just wait till they send for a doctor, who tells them they're sick enough to go to a hospital. We go out and send them to the hospital.

"I believe the future will see groups of 'little Mayo clinics' in hotels, in industrial plants, among merchants, and even in rural communities. It will be a great thing for the disabled doctors who come back from the war, too. There are now 100,000 doctors in our armed forces. Many will return disabled. Many will be able to carry on their profession in these clinics, despite the handicap."—Portland *Oregonian*, September 19.

In the above press item, the general and erroneous argument of de Kruif is again expounded, but through press association dispatches, owing to the present prominence of Mr. Kaiser, it has no doubt come to the attention of thousands and thousands of citizens. It is only another example that goes to explain why so many citizens throughout the nation have been misled into forming faulty opinions concerning modern-day medicine and practice, and emphasizes again why the medical profession should carry on consistent educational campaigns in which actual facts and truths concerning medical service and practice will be presented to the public.

Readers of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE may find it worth while to refer to the review excerpts from de Kruif's book, printed elsewhere in this issue. Comment is there made for which no place can be found in this department of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL

#### WAGNER-MURRAY BILL: CRITICISM FROM AN UNSUSPECTED SOURCE

**Health and Sickness Legislation in California.**—The first major attempt to inflict a compulsory health insurance plan upon California was made more than twenty-five years ago. Mr. Chester Rowell of San Francisco, well-known editor and publicist, was the chairman of the State Commission in charge of the effort, and Miss Barbara Nachtrieb its secretary. A quarter of a century later they were still active in their propaganda. So much so, that Governor Olson appointed them to the same positions when, several years ago, he attempted, unsuccessfully, to drive a "must pass" compulsory health insurance measure through the California Legislature.

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**Columnist Rowell's Criticisms of the Wagner-Murray Bill.**—Mr. Rowell, in his syndicated press column, again and again has discussed health or

sickness insurance. In his comments he has not been backward in casting blame upon organized medicine and its representatives as being responsible in good part for the non-enactment of proposed statutes designed to bring sickness insurance into operation under State control.

When on September 7, 1943, he printed some sharp criticisms of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill (S. 1161), his action took on interest for Californians. In this place, only brief excerpts are given, the complete article appearing in the Department of the Committee on Public Policy and Legislation, on page 233.

Somebody sends a reprint of a letter from a Chicago correspondent to the *Christian Science Monitor* quoting medical, not Christian Science, objections to an alleged "Wagner-Murray" bill said to be before Congress which, under the guise of sickness insurance, has for its real purpose the destruction of "free economy" and the "complete bureaucratic domination of the American people," and the reduction of the doctors to "abject slavery." . . .

But all this has nothing to do with the immediate publicity, which is all quoted from one John M. Pratt, "executive administrator" (in other words, publicity agent) of the "National Physicians' Committee." . . .

We have not seen the text of this alleged sickness insurance bill, but if it even remotely resembles the account of it quoted from Mr. Pratt, it could scarcely receive a single vote in Congress and would certainly be repudiated by every informed supporter of health insurance. There were no such provisions in a single health insurance system in the world in the days before the war when every civilized country except the United States had such a system, and this writer at least, who has for fifty years been urging the adoption of health insurance by American states, never heard of any such proposal here—except in the bugaboo publicity of paid lobbyists. . . .

Here, however, is one of them who, like the gentleman from Missouri, waits to be "shown."

In the above, Mr. Rowell states he was not in possession of a copy of the Wagner-Murray Bill, but he has no doubt made request therefor. After he peruses the text of S. 1161, he will probably find that the statements concerning its contents and scope, as put out by the National Physicians' Committee, are quite to the point. In view of his implied condemnation of the measure—on the basis of the N. P. S. digest—it will be interesting to observe what trend future remarks by Mr. Rowell on the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill (S. 1161) will take.

#### IN RETROSPECT: ON TWO MILITARY ITEMS

**Physicians Enrolled in Armed Services in World War I.**—Some readers have established the habit of scanning the items which appear in the Twenty-Five Years Ago department, to be found always on the last text page of every issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. Because many other members may not read that column, two excerpts in the current issue appear below, which should be of interest since they shed light on the activities of the medical profession in World War I. Colleagues of twenty-five years ago set an excellent standard.